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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/016,515	10/26/2001	Donald H. Lindsey III	82520DAN	8321

7590 02/19/2003

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EXAMINER

HUYNH, LOUIS K

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3721

DATE MAILED: 02/19/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/016,515	LINDSEY ET AL.
Examiner	Art Unit	
Louis K. Huynh	3721	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 October 2001 .

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-44 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) 1-44 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s)
4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____.
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-11 and 44, drawn to a method of shrink wrapping a plurality of products, classified in class 53, subclass 442.
 - II. Claims 12-14, drawn to a method of stacking products, classified in class 53, subclass 445.
 - III. Claims 15-22 and 40-43, drawn to a system for assembling a group of products, classified in class 53, subclass 154.
 - IV. Claims 23-26, drawn to an apparatus for packaging a stack of products, classified in class 53, subclass 147.
 - V. Claims 27-32, drawn to a method of dispensing products onto a conveying system, classified in class 53, subclass 445.
 - VI. Claims 33-39, drawn to a computer program product, classified in class 700, subclass 9.
2. The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions I and (II & IV) are unrelated. Inventions are unrelated if it can be shown that they are not disclosed as capable of use together and they have different modes of operation, different functions, or different effects (MPEP § 806.04, MPEP § 808.01). In the instant case, the invention of Groups II & IV are drawn to a method and apparatus for packaging a stack of the same type of products which have different modes of operation, different functions and

different effects from the invention of Group I which is drawn to a method of packaging a stack of a plurality of different products.

Inventions I and III are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus such as one having a means for associating the customer order identification with the customer order; and (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process such as one having a step of dispensing the same type of photofinishing component into the order group on the second conveyor to create an assembled product of the same type of photofinishing components.

Inventions (I & II) and V are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because the dispensers do not have dispense the products in sequence. The subcombination has separate utility such as dispensing all products in sequence onto the conveying system.

Inventions VI and (I, II & V) are related as product and process of use. The inventions can be shown to be distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially different product or (2) the

product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product (MPEP § 806.05(h)). In the instant case the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially different product such as one having the step of shrink wrapping the assembled product automatically via a mechanical contact switch or photo sensor as the assembled product reaches the wrapping station without the need for a command from the computer program to be executed.

Inventions II and III are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus such as one having one conveyor for accepting the photofinishing products, retail products and general products without the need of a second conveyor; and (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process such as one having a step of dispensing at least one retail components into the order group on a second conveyor.

Inventions II and IV are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus such as one having a conveying system comprising more than one conveyor for conveying the photofinishing products, retail products and general products.

Inventions IV and III are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because the system as claimed in Group IV does not need a second conveyor since the dispensing system can be arranged to dispense products into the order group on the same conveyor. The subcombination has separate utility such as for conveying the assembled products to a packaging station.

Inventions V and III are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus such as one having a plurality of dedicated product dispensers arranged along a conveyor for sequentially dispensing all the products on the conveyor; and (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process such as one having a step dispensing the a different product into the order group on a second conveyor.

Inventions (III & IV) and VI are related as subcombinations disclosed as usable together in a single combination. The subcombinations are distinct from each other if they are shown to be separately usable. In the instant case, invention (III & IV) has separate utility such as dispensing product components onto the conveyor to form an assembled product; and invention

VI has a separate utility such as virtually dispensing virtual product components on virtual conveyor to for a virtual assembled product. See MPEP § 806.05(d).

Inventions V and IV are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus such as one having a plurality of dedicated product dispensers placed along the conveying system for sequentially dispensing products on to the conveying system; and (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process such as one having a step of dispensing the product components one on top of the other to form a assemblies stack of products on the conveying system.

3. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

4. Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143).

5. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the

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application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

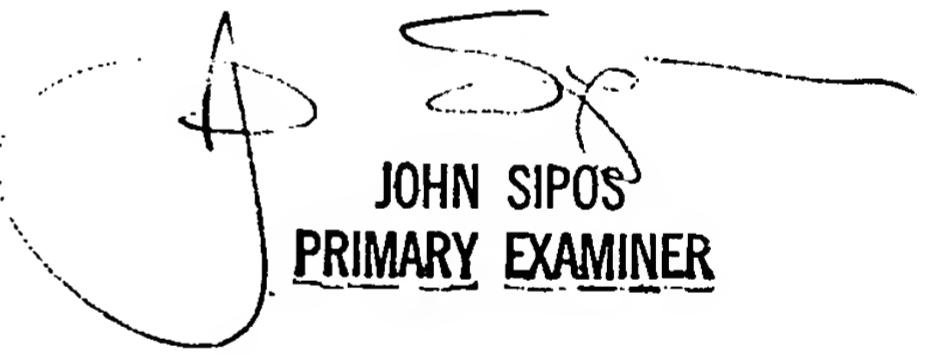
6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Louis K. Huynh whose telephone number is (703) 306-5694.

The examiner can normally be reached on M-F from 9:30AM to 5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Rinaldi I. Rada can be reached on (703) 308-2187. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 305-3579 for regular communications and (703) 308-7769 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1148.

LH
February 11, 2003


JOHN SIPOS
PRIMARY EXAMINER